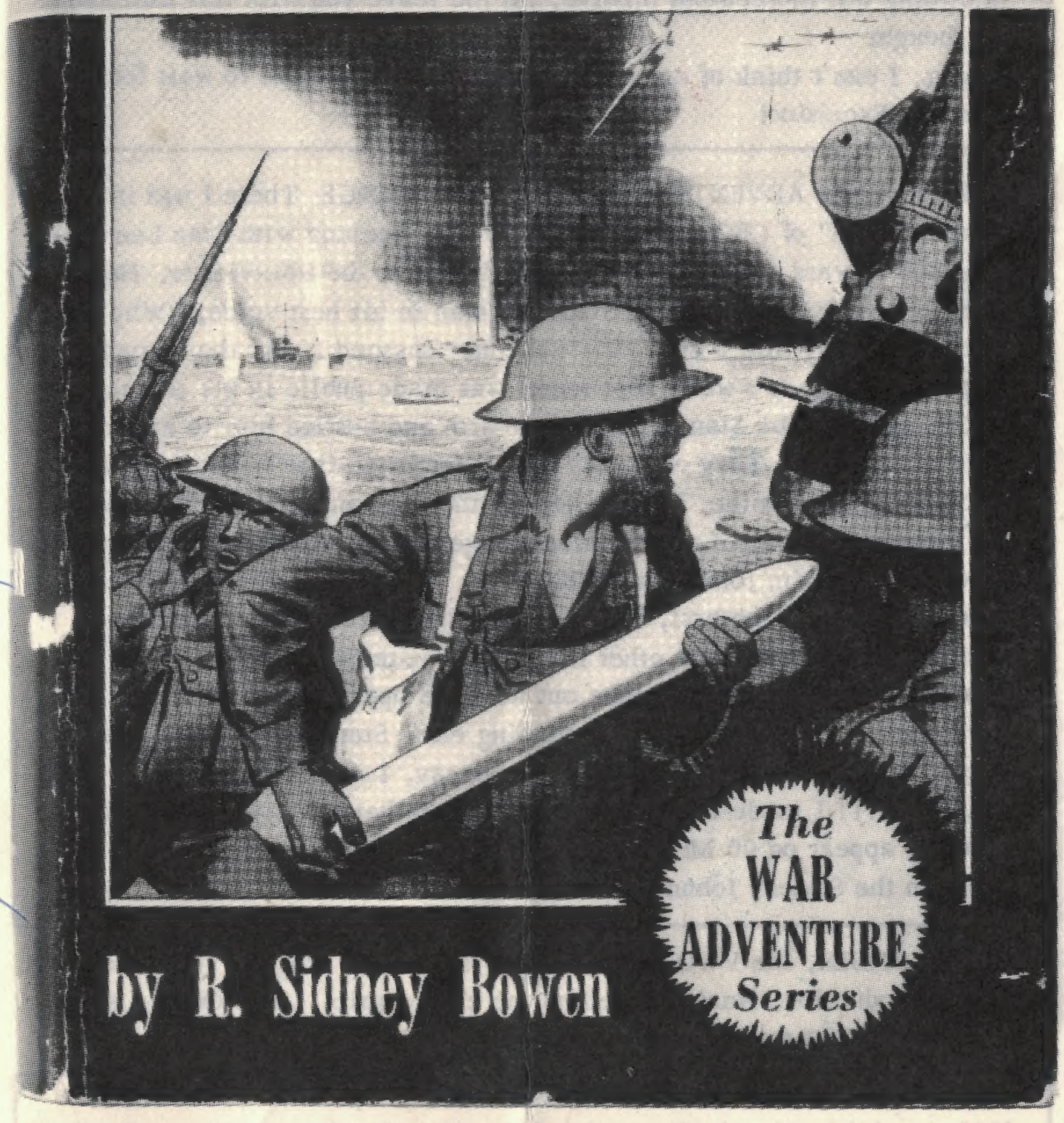
CAPTAIN GEORGE'S

Penny Dreadful

TORONTO, APRIL 29, 1977 NUMBER 427

DAVE DAWSON *at* DUNKIRK



by R. Sidney Bowen

The WAR ADVENTURE *Series*

See page 4

A WEEKLY REVIEW

WE GET LETTERS

STAN LEE, publisher of Marvel Comics Group, sends along the following word to Captain George:

Just a line to tell you it was great seeing you in Toronto the other day at the "90 Minutes Live" show.

It was fun reminiscing about the time you had that comic book fair at the Markham Street Village and were reckless enough to invite me as your guest of honor.

I also want to reiterate the fact that I truly enjoy receiving Captain George's Penny Dreadful and feel that this, the most fabulous 4-page fanzine of all, is a publication of which the entire Vast Whizzbang Organization can be justly proud.

In closing this momentous missive, let me leave you with this tintinnabulating thought--

Shucks, I can't think of one at the moment. It will have to wait for our next letter. Excelsior!

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN GEORGE: There I was in the "Green Room" of CBC-TV's 90 Minutes Live yacking with Stan Lee when I leaned forward and whispered, "Watch out for the interviewer. He's a dud." "A dud!!!" responded Stan The Man in his best voice, "Why the hell would they hire a dud???" "Shhhhh," shushed I. But the damage was done. Canada's worst kept secret was made public in his presence. A CBC gopher took Stan gently by the arm and hustled him to another part of the room. They obviously hadn't forgotten that William Ronald, another friend of mine, had walked off the show in a huff halfway into an interview. Stan, of course, was a huge success. Even the opera singer who preceded him joined in on the yucks. It was something like the Three Stooges... the host, Stan Lee and the opera singer. They did everything but poke each other in the eyes... though, at one point, I thought Stan was going to make out with the opera singer. The cast and crew party after the show was something else. Stan didn't attend, so there I was by my lonesome. Needless to say, I didn't stay long. If looks could kill!!! I made a graceless exit assured that never would I be invited to appear on 90 Minutes Live... What's the name of that guy down in the States? Johnny...

KENNETH ANGER, the VWO's good friend, sends us a program for the current Broadway production, Annie, based on the comic strip, Little Orphan Annie. Ken's own succinct review of the musical: "Harold Gray it's not!"

CAPTAIN GEORGE'S PENNY DREADFUL, a weekly review established in 1968, is published by the Vast Whizzbang Organization at Memory Lane, 594 Markham Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

DON MILLER

I would like to see a World Series of Toronto vs Montreal. I would also like to become a multimillionaire. Until either one occurs, some additions to your fascinating baseball lore in PD #423:

Some more baseball luminaries in films include Lou Gehrig, excellent in the Smith Ballew Western, Rawhide ('38); Joe Di Maggio in Republic's Manhattan Merry-Go-Round, doing a sketch with Henry Armetta; New York players Bill Dickey, Mark Koenig and Bob Meusel, in addition to Babe Ruth, in Pride of the Yankees; former Montreal first baseman and brief Brooklyn major leaguer Chuck Connors, a lengthy film career beginning with Pat and Mike, with Tracy and Hepburn; veteran player Johnny Beradino, eventually a regular in TV's soap opera General Hospital; Dodger pitching aces Don Drysdale and Sandy Koufax, briefly and ineptly on celluloid before turning to other pursuits; Jerome and brother Paul Dean, portraying themselves in a two-reeler about them, Dizzy and Daffy; the Brooklyn Dodger club with manager Leo Durocher in Red Skelton's farce Whistling in Brooklyn ('43); the Cleveland Indians, including Lou Boudreau, Satchel Paige and others, in The Kid from Cleveland ('49); many, many others, with innumerable athletes doing film commercials or appearing in one-shot deals.

Being sneaky about it, you could list another baseball musical as Disney's 1946 Make Mine Music, in which one number is Jerry Colonna's depiction of "Casey At the Bat." This sequence was released separately later on. Another hilarious Disney treat is How To Play Baseball, an entry in the "Goofy" sports parade.

Several actors have portrayed baseball players more than once. Gary Cooper as Gehrig, and also in Meet John Doe, where he played an ex-pitcher. Lloyd Nolan was a pitcher in Mr. Dynamite and a Brooklyn manager in It Happened in Flatbush a year or so later. Buster Keaton, a diamond fanatic offscreen, played ball in College, and in the sound short One Run Elmer. Joe E. Brown, another devotee, as Lardner's Elmer the Great and Alibi Ike. Eddie Albert, pitching for VMI in Brother Rat, then in the big leagues five years later in Ladies' Day ('43). Paul Douglas played in It Happens Every Spring (catcher), then managed in Angels in the Outfield.

John Ford was fond of baseball, and crammed sequences into early-sound features Up the River and Born Reckless. Two of the films he directed for TV deal with baseball, Rookie of the Year and Flashing Spikes.

Another superb short is the one-reel Pete Smith novelty, Diamond Demon ('47), which shows baseball entertainer Jackie Price doing all manner of seemingly impossible things on the field. One should also mention Charley Chase's uproarious two-reeler, The Heckler, and its inferior remake with Shemp Howard, Mr. Noisy.

Most recent baseball show is The Bingo Long Traveling All Stars and Motor Kings, with Billy Dee Williams and James Earl Jones. And there's no more space. Play ball!

PETE HARRIS

ADVENTURES OF YESTERYEAR: When I was in grade 6 at Duke of Kent public school in Lansing, Ontario (fabled burg of my childhood), there was a substitute teacher unlike any other teacher I had encountered up to that point in my young life. She would appear every so often, usually for a half-day or a day at a time, in place of our regular teacher. Invariably, she would be accompanied by her pre-school daughter who sat quietly through the school day working at a coloring book. And invariably, this substitute teacher would go through the motions of trying to pound something into our thick young skulls and then she would read aloud to us. And what she would read aloud was one of Robert Sidney Bowen's Dave Dawson adventure books. Needless to say, we were enthralled, hopped up as most of us were on the then-current war news.

I was reminded of those pleasant interludes of long ago when I heard last week that Robert Sidney Bowen had died at the age of 76 in Honolulu where he had lived since 1963. Bowen was, and I quote from the dust jacket of Dave Dawson At Dunkirk, "the youngest member of the Royal Flying Corps and the R.A.F. He was born in Boston and went to school there. He left high school to drive an ambulance for the French army (in World War I) until he was sent home because he was under age. He lied about his age and enlisted in the R.F.C. The famous Vernon Castle was his instructor. Back in France as a scout pilot he shot down a number of German planes and balloons... Then he became a newspaperman, test pilot, editor of Aviation Magazine and finally a famous writer of flying, sport and action stories..."

In the 1930s and 40s, Bowen was a prolific pulp writer and his stories, adorned with such titles as The Dead Won't Help You, Lair of the Vulture, Suicide Patrol, Leatherneck Wings, The Fighting Canadians and Heroes Be Damned, appeared in Dare-Devil Aces, Fighting Aces, Sky Devils, RAF Aces and Battle Birds. Under the Better Publications house name of Lieut. Scott Morgan, he wrote some of the Captain Danger stories in Air War and under his own byline he wrote the pulp saga of Dusty Ayres and His Battle Birds, which featured such titles as Black Lightning, Crimson Doom, Purple Tornado, The Red Destroyer and The White Death. A number of his Dusty Ayres yarns were reprinted by Corinth Publications in 1966.

I used to read a lot of Robert Sidney Bowen's pulp yarns, especially in Dare-Devil Aces, but it is the Dave Dawson series for which I remember him best--Dave Dawson At Dunkirk, Dave Dawson At Singapore, Dave Dawson On Convoy Patrol, Dave Dawson In Libya and so on, all of which also featured Dave's sidekick, Freddy Farmer. I remember them because once there was a substitute teacher who, at a time when school kids were severely limited in their range of "approved" reading matter, thought the Dave Dawson stories were good enough and interesting enough to be part of our learning.